

Message Text

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41

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OPIC-03 /061 W

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R 280739Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1674

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: EPISCOPAL DOCUMENT ON RECONCILIATION

REF: MADRID 1881

SUMMARY: HARD-HITTING CATHOLIC BISHOPS' DOCUMENT ON RECONCILIATION CONTAINING VARIOUS CRITICISMS OF GOVT FINALLY ISSUED, BUT HAS NOT PROVOKED ANY STRONG GOVT REACTION. END SUMMARY.

1. ON APRIL 19 SPANISH BISHOPS CONFERENCE RELEASED COLLECTIVE PASTORAL LETTER ENTITLED "RECONCILIATION IN CHURCH AND IN SPANISH SOCIETY". ISSUANCE WAS TIMED COINCIDE WITH 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF CLOSURE VATICAN II AND WITH POPE PAUL'S CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL RECONCILIATION DURING CURRENT HOLY YEAR. DOCUMENT HAD BEEN APPROVED AT FEBRUARY PLENARY OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE BUT ONLY LEAKED VERSIONS AVAILABLE TILL NOW.

2. DOCUMENT APPEALED FOR: (A) FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION, AND ASSOCIATION; (B) MORE EFFECTIVE RECOGNITION

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OF RIGHTS OF PERSONS AND GROUPS WITHIN LIMITS IMPOSED BY

PUBLIC ORDER AND COMMON GOOD; (C) END TO CIVIL WAR'S DIVISIONS OF SPANIARDS INTO VANQUISHED AND VICTORS; (D) FREEDOM FOR WORKING CLASS TO FULLY EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS AND TO PARTICIPATE RESPONSIBLY IN DEFENSE THEIR INTERESTS; (E) GOVT NOT TO CONSTRUE CRITICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS ITS POLICIES AS A POSTURE OF ENMITY; (F) REVISION OF LEGISLATION PROHOBITING STRIKES; AND (G) CONCERN FOR RIGHTS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES SUCH AS CATALANS, BASQUES AND GALICIANS.

3. DOCUMENT HAD BEEN IN PREPARATION SINCE MAY OF 1973. AT FEBRUARY EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE IT WAS REPORTEDLY PASSED BY AN OVERHWELMING MAJORITY OF 70 OF 81 ASSEMBLED BISHOPS, WITH ONLY SMALL DIE-HARD CONSERVATIVE MINORITY OPPOSING DOCUMENT.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS ONE OF MOST FAR-REACHING DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED BY EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE IN RECENT YEARS. ALTHOUGH ITS STRESS IS ON RECONCILIATION, ITS THRUST IS DIRECTED MOSTLY AGAINST GOVT, WITH ITS CALL FOR RAPID AND INCREASED HUMAN, LABOR, AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, AND A SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION BY CIVIL WAR VICTORS TOWARD THE VANQUISHED. IT DOES, HOWEVER, CONTAIN A FEW BOWS IN THE GOVT'S DIRECTION, SUCH AS BY WARNING AGAINST NEW IDEOLOGIES WHICH WOULD IMPOSE NEW DICTATORSHIPS, AN ALLUSION TO PCE AND OTHER SUBVERSIVE GROUPS.

5. NOTWITHSTANDING HARD-HITTING TEXT IT WAS NOT, DESPITE OTHER RECENT IRRITANTS SUCH AS THE FEBRUARY CHURCH/STATE FUROR OVER THE SUSPENSION OF MADRID CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY (SEE REFTEL), BROUGHT ABOUT ANY STRONG GOVT REACTIONS OR OUTBURSTS. FACT THAT MOST OF ITS CONTENTS HAD ALREADY BEEN KNOWN DURING PAST TWO MONTHS, HAD SOMEWHAT DIMINISHED INTEREST IN DOCUMENT BY TIME IT WAS ACTUALLY RELEASED. THIS, COUPLED WITH FACT IT WAS FINALLY RELEASED BY EPISCOPATE AT A TIME WHEN NO OTHER MAJOR POLITICAL OR CHURCH/STATE CRISIS OCCUPIED PUBLIC ATTENTION, HAD LED TO ACCEPTANCE OF THE DOCUMENT BY PRESS, GENERAL PUBLIC, AND PERHAPS EVEN BY GOVT ITSELF, WITH A FAIR DEGREE OF EQUANIMITY.
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Message Attributes

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